



The Grand Portage Guide

2016
National Park Service
CENTENNIAL



Conservation and an Early Park Experience

Superintendent Tim Cochrane

Grand Portage is about a lot of things: cross cultural contact, travel to wayward parts of North America accessible by canoe, multi-national business affairs (and deceptions), the trapping and trading of thousands upon thousands of beaver, otter, and marten pelts to be made into accoutrements of European fashion (mostly hats). When we talk Grand Portage we often assume a great passage of time. And indeed, we should as the Grand Portage pathway was a prehistoric interstate connecting the Great Lakes to the western interior of the continent. These ancient travelers stopped here, along the Portage, and at the other end of the Portage or what is now called "Fort Charlotte."

This year, the National Park Service is also celebrating the passage of time or one hundred years of the organization's existence. In 1916 the National Park Service was born with the purpose "...to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the



Tim welcomes Stone Bridge Singers who open Rendezvous Days. wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." This was (and still is) a remarkable ideal. There are now over 400 park units in the United States. But this idea, the idea of the value of parks, has become an international idea manifest in most countries.

And the park idea continues to be reinvented and tweaked. Grand Portage National Monument is, for example, the only national park unit that is jointly managed with a tribe, or what some call "co-management." This is absolutely appropriate as the Grand Portage people participated in the fur trade and gave much of their lands back to the American people to create Grand Portage National Monument. Today virtually all that you see, or learn here has been touched and crafted out of our alliance with the Grand Portage people!

The National Park Service centennial is one of a number of commemorations this year, some significant

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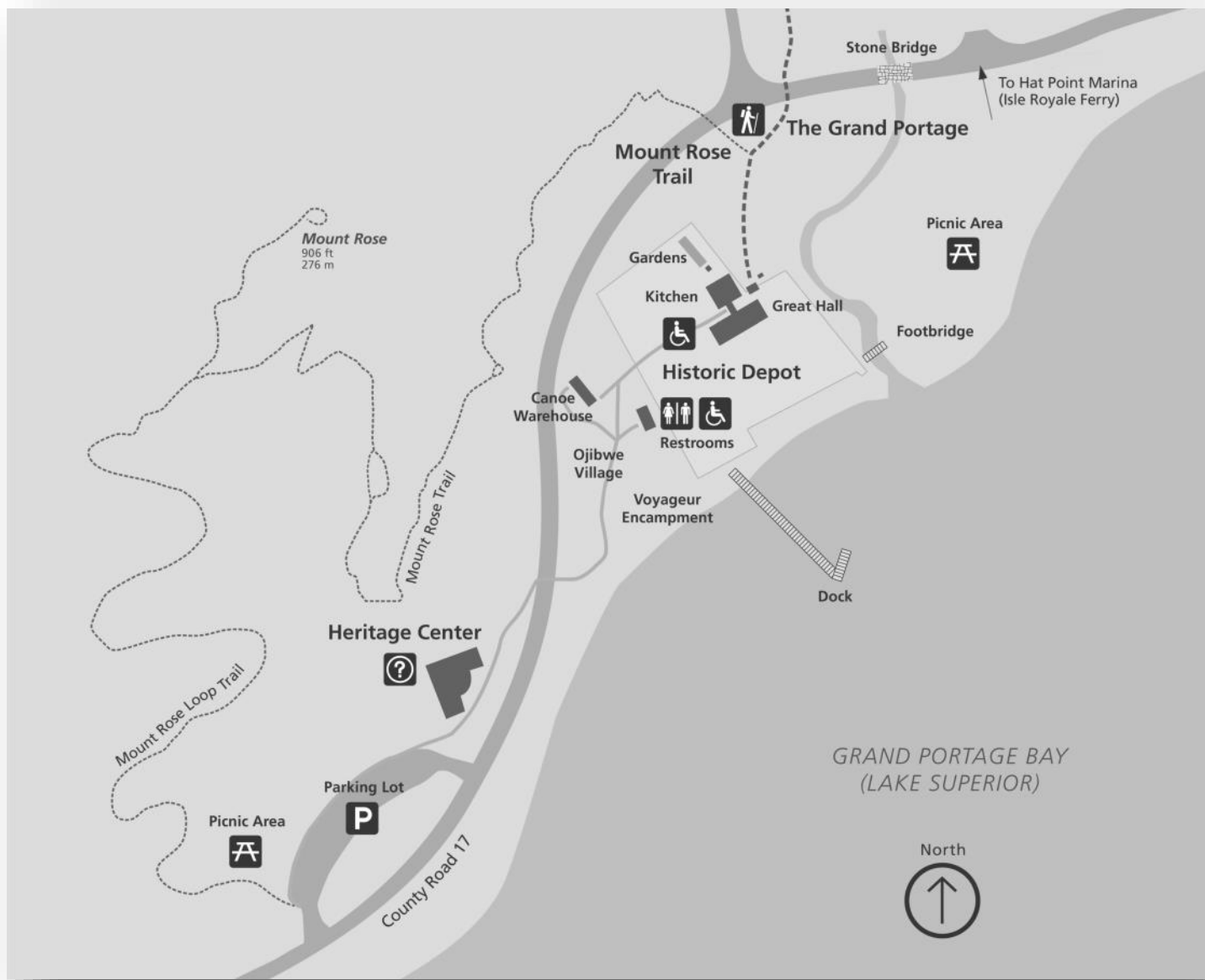
Boozhoo Bonjour Welcome

Welcome to Grand Portage. We are pleased you are here and exploring “Portage” with us. There is much to see and do. Please join our interpreters and participate in the past. Please ask us about the fur trade and its ingenious technology, or its novel customs. Or come and learn about the intrinsic links between the fur traders and the nearby residents, the Grand Portage Ojibwe.

The Staff of Grand Portage National Monument

A GUIDE TO HELP YOU FIND YOUR WAY AT GRAND PORTAGE NATIONAL MONUMENT

More than 200 years ago, the North West Company concentrated its business activities in and around the stockade. Four of the most important structures have been reconstructed on their original foundations: The Great Hall, kitchen, warehouse, and gatehouse. National Park Service employees and Volunteers-In-Parks (VIPs) staff these buildings. You will find rangers and VIPs wearing dress appropriate to the period, or in the NPS uniform.



ACTIVITIES & RANGER-CONDUCTED PROGRAMS

LIVING HISTORY DEMONSTRATIONS

Come to the Voyageur Encampment and Ojibwe Village, where you will see demonstrations of Ojibwe and voyageur life in the late 1700s. While there, see our American Indian Three Sisters garden, and view a North West Company trade gun.

Visit the Great Hall, historically furnished circa 1790s. Also in the Great Hall, there is a Try-It-On historic clothing exhibit where *you* can fit into history!

Follow your nose to the kitchen, where you can see period cooking and baking demonstrations from mid-June through early September. Don't miss our historic heirloom garden and outdoor bake oven located just behind the kitchen.



Kitchen chef has prepared roasted fowl.

RANGER-CONDUCTED INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS

History comes alive when you take part in an interpretive program here at Grand Portage. Park rangers will transport you back in time, where you can become part of the story that unfolds before you!

These programs range in length from 20 minutes to 60 minutes. Be sure and check the "Program" sign in the Heritage Center or ask information desk staff for program topics, locations, and starting times. Please note: Our program schedule is subject to change without notice due to staffing or weather conditions.

VIDEO PRESENTATIONS

Video programs are offered regularly in the Heritage Center classroom. There are several to choose from. *Schedule subject to change.*

"Rendezvous With History: A Grand Portage Story" – Running time is 23 minutes. - *Shown on the hour.*

Short Subjects: "Our Home: The Grand Portage Ojibwe," "The Men of the North West Company," "The Gift of the Birch Bark Canoe," "A Gap in the Hills: Geography of Grand Portage" - Running time 24 minutes - *Shown on the half hour.*

SELF-GUIDED ACTIVITIES

HIKING TRAILS

The Grand Portage: The 8.5-mile *Grand Portage* is open for hiking. Two campsites are available for camping at Fort Charlotte. A free permit is required, and can be obtained at the Heritage Center or online at: www.nps.gov/grpo/planyourvisit/permitsandreservations.htm. For more information about camping at Fort Charlotte please see page 12.

Mt. Rose Trail: The Mt. Rose trail, located across from the historic depot, is a paved ½-mile-long nature trail which climbs 300 feet for a spectacular vista of the depot and Lake Superior. Approximate hiking time is 1 hour. A self-guiding trail brochure is available at the trail head. The new Mount Rose Loop Trail (see map page 2) begins at the west end of the parking lot in the picnic area.

BROCHURES AVAILABLE

We offer several brochures for your use and enjoyment:

- NPS Grand Portage Official Map and Guide
- Ojibwe Lifeways
- Historic Gardens
- Bird & Wildlife Checklists
- Mt. Rose Trail
- Grand Portage Rocks

JUNIOR RANGER PROGRAM

Become a Grand Portage Junior Ranger! This program, for kids ages 7 to 13, is free. Activity guides can be picked up at the Heritage Center and Great Hall. You should allow at least 1½ hours to complete this activity. When finished, kids are awarded a Junior Ranger badge and a voyageur's contract. This is a family activity and we encourage parents to get involved and enjoy the program with their kids! Children under the age of 7, or those with special needs, will require the assistance of an adult.

BOOKS WORTH BROWSING

To help alleviate the isolation of winter posts, the North West Company provided reading materials. Daniel Harmon, a North West Company clerk wrote,

"Most of our leisure moments (and which is nearly nine tenths of our time) will be spent reading, and conversing on what we have read."



The following titles may be found in *your* local library:

- "Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teaching of Plants" Robin Kimmerer, 2015. Milkweed Editions, Minneapolis, MN, 408 pg.
- "The Creator's Game" by Art Coulson, 2013. The Michigan State University Press, St. Paul, MN 46 pg.
- "French and Indians in the Heart of North America" edited by Robert Englebert & Guillaume Teasdale, 2013. Minnesota Historical Society Press, East Lansing, MI, 256 pg.
- "Original Local: Indigenous Foods, Stories, and Recipes from the Upper Midwest" by Heid E. Erdrich, 2013. The Minnesota Historical Society Press, St. Paul, MN, 264 pg.
- "Talking Sky: Ojibwe Constellations as a Reflection of Life on the Land" by Carl Gawboy & Ron Morton, 2014. Rock-flower Press, Duluth, MN, 114 pg.
- "North Shore: A Natural History of Minnesota's Superior Coast" by Chel Anderson & Adelheid Fischer, 2015. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, MN, 632 pg.
- "The Writings of David Thompson, Volume II" edited by William E. Moreau, 2015. McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal, Quebec, 310 pg.
- "Powwow Summer: A Family Celebrates the Circle of Life" by Marcie Rendon, 2013. The Minnesota Historical Society Press, St. Paul, MN, 44 pg.
- "Freshwater Passages: The Trade and Travels of Peter Pond" by David Chapin, 2014. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, NE, 376 pg.
- "Before and After the Horizon: Anishinaabe Artists of the Great Lakes" edited by David W. Penny & Gerald McMaster, 2013. National Museum of the American Indian, Washington, D.C., 128 pg.
- "Modern Spirit: The Art of George Morrison" by W. Jackson Rushing III & Kristen Makhholm, 2013. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, OK, 182 pg.

These books are also available at the Eastern National bookstore in the Grand Portage National Monument Heritage Center.

The Grand Rendezvous

Ranger Karl Koster

The hustle and bustle of summer activity peaked with the North West Company Rendezvous held here at Grand Portage. This was the time when furs from wintering posts, which reached into Canada, were delivered down the historic *Grand Portage*. The annual Rendezvous is still celebrated here during the second full weekend of August. The event is held in conjunction with the Rendezvous Days and Powwow, sponsored by the Grand Portage Band of

Lake Superior Chippewa. The annual gathering is our biggest and grandest celebration of the year, a time when Grand Portage comes alive and reflects on its rich heritage. Re-enactors from across the country and Canada gather to camp and challenge each other. This is one event you do not want to miss! Music, dancing, craft demonstrations, and hands-on workshops ensure an exciting weekend at the national monument.



Beyond the Trade: The Historic Anishinaabe Village at Grand Portage

Chief of Resources Management Bill Clayton

Welcome to Grand Portage for our latest season! Last year I wrote an article in this newsletter about that extraordinary little flying mammal - the bat. It was a general article intended to draw attention to this beleaguered and very much misunderstood critter and provide an introduction to a more detailed article on its habits, habitat and biology. I am also planning to nail down some of the current threats to the species that are out there in the world, like the shockingly destructive "White Nose" syndrome, a deadly fungal malady that can kill bats by using up the stored fat reserves that they live off of during hibernation as well as increase the acidity of their blood and possibly cause high, heart-damaging levels of potassium. Nasty stuff. I'm also intending to write about the usual threat to the survival of most species, not just bats, and that is the persistent and chronic problem of "habitat loss" and "habitat fragmenta-

tion." However another significant issue has recently come up that I need to tell you about that's brewing here at the park, so I'm going to postpone my prattle on bats until next year's issue. Hopefully by then, I may have some hopeful things to say about those extraordinary animals...

For the present article, I'd like to briefly focus your attention to another major resource this park was created to preserve and protect - the history and archaeological remnants of the first reservation village here at Grand Portage, most of which is located within the boundaries of the park. Established with the signing of the 1854 Treaty with the U.S. government, which took lands of what is present-day northeastern Minnesota from bands of Lake Superior Anishinaabe and forced them on to reservations, the reservation

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Photo of the Village as it was in the 1920s.

Gallagher Photo

village at Grand Portage dates back to at least the middle of the 19th century. According to evidence from historic documents, photographs, maps and archaeology the original “core” area of this village was set up on the shoreline in what is now known as the “Meadow” and “Picnic” areas of the park just downhill from the present village core.

For over 80 years, under hardship conditions, not to mention the controlling eyes of the U.S. government, Grand Portage Anishinaabe families made this area home. They filled it with homesteads, houses, out-buildings, pastures, gardens, walking pathways, roads, and fishing infrastructure. Here they built and maintained a viable community based primarily on water transportation and dog-sled, and preserved



Photo of the Village waterfront ca. 1920. The long white building on the left was the second school for the village, it sat on top of the hill in what is now the picnic area. (Continued on page 7)

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Photo of the original Grand Portage Village site after removal taken around 1940.

Gallagher Photo

their highly adaptable culture down through the generations to the present day. It wasn't until the coming of what became Highway 61 in the 1920s that the transportation options turned landward. By the 1940s people left the old village site as population and opportunities brought by the new road grew, the village spread out and its core area moved inland closer to the highway.

Since 1958 when the national monument was enacted by Congress, the archaeological remains of the original core area of the Grand Portage village site have been spread over the eastern area of the Lake Superior unit of the park (incidentally, there is much more to the park AWAY from the shoreline that I strongly encourage you to experience). It has always been a major focus of the park to interpret the history and



Photo of the waterfront after removal of the original village core area in the 1940s. The third village school, built by the CCC in the 1930s up on the can be seen to the right of the Holy Rosary Church, the oldest Catholic Church in Minnesota. (Continued on page 8)

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culture of the Grand Portage Anishinaabe as well as what happened here on these shores during the fur trade period. However, the archaeology done here at the monument has never put much emphasis on researching the village site itself, or the lifeway of the Anishinaabe. Most of the 80 years of archaeology research effort at Grand Portage has been dedicated to looking at fur trade sites and understanding the lay-out of the North West Company post in order to rebuild the stockade and gather information on what a few of the architecturally striking buildings within it may have looked like. In short, the interpretation of the Anishinaabe community here has been informed by history, cultural anthropology and more importantly, interviews from living descendants in the community, more so than any archaeological work. In order to have the most detailed, complete picture we can have of the historic village, all forms of research, whether history or archaeology, need to be completed as fully as is possible.



Park staff and volunteers excavating a portion of the old Grand Portage Village site in 2015.

In order to meet that need the Resource Division here at Grand Portage with help from the Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa (Anishinaabe), staff the National Park Service's Midwest Archaeology Center, Isle Royale National Park and the Superior National Forest, has begun the initial work on the archaeology of the Village site. From this research we hope to learn more about the "material" side of reservation village life and culture. That is, we hope to learn more about how Anishinaabe people made their living here at Grand Portage, after the fur trade companies moved out of the area and the reservation was set up. An example research question is, we'd like to know more about things like what kinds of vegetables they were growing in their gardens, or what kinds of plants both natural and cultivated they were using in their day-to-day living.



Grand Portage elders visit the 2015 excavations.

There's photographic and historic evidence of Village residents raising livestock – we'd like to know more, if possible, about what role livestock played in the daily lives of villagers. What were they raising cows for? Beef only? Milk? Both? Were they keeping chickens or hogs? Historic documents from both the fur trade and later periods hint at growing hay here at Grand Portage. What was that about? Were they bringing in non-native grasses and cultivating them? Was it local stuff being grown or was it a mix? Was there any other source of livestock feed for the villagers like annuities payments coming in from the Bureau of Indian Affairs? The BIA seemed to have a penchant for forcing native peoples on reservations into becoming farmers so were they supplying anything to help raise the livestock and support their farming policies?



Park volunteers excavating part of the old Village site in 2015.

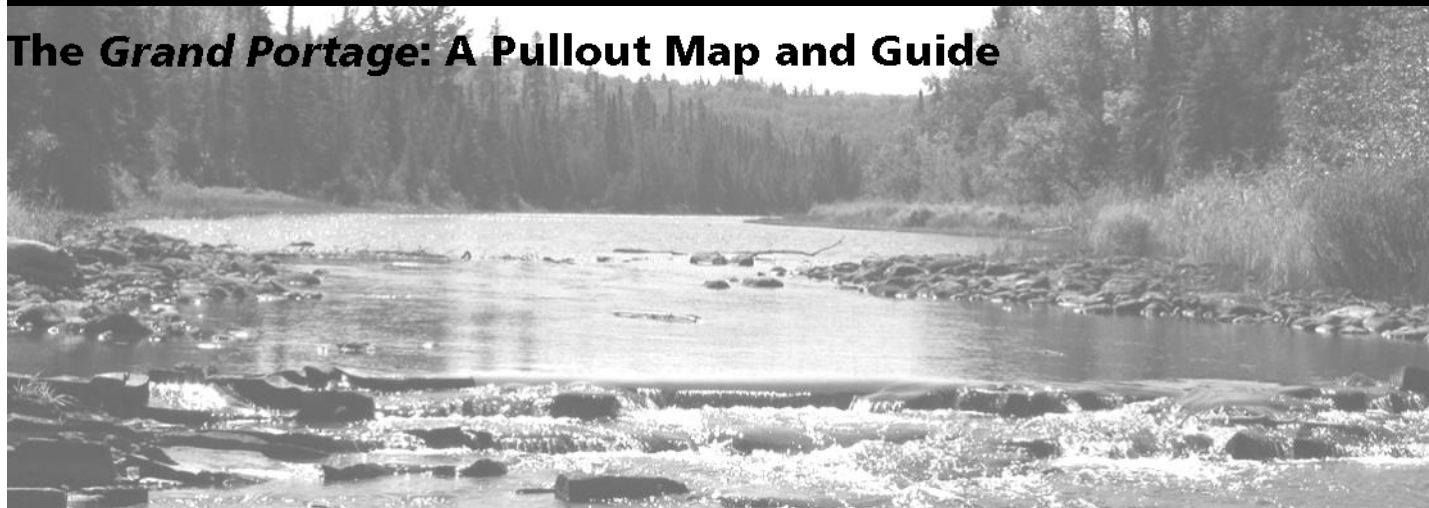
These questions and many, many more like them, are going to be asked in the coming years of the archaeological remains of the village still in the ground – hopefully, some will be answered. Personally I'd like to see all of them answered, and answered with full clarity – but alas, we haven't invented time machines yet. Stay tuned...

Grand Portage

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



The Grand Portage: A Pullout Map and Guide



History

Native people have traveled this footpath between the Pigeon River and Lake Superior for centuries. The Ojibwe called the *Portage* “*Gichi Onigaming*,” The Great Carrying Place. *Gichi Onigaming* or the *Grand Portage*, to those from Montréal in the colony of New France, enabled Ojibwe and other Indian peoples to conduct trade with neighboring tribes and to access local hunting and gathering areas. Ojibwe people frequently traveled the *Portage* carrying birch bark canoes and baskets, fish from Lake Superior, garden seed, wild rice, raw copper from Isle Royale and flint from Gunflint Lake.

In the late 17th century, as French trade with woodland peoples expanded, explorers such as Daniel Greysolon, *Sieur Du Lhut*, may have learned about the *Grand Portage* through contacts with Ojibwe, Cree or Assiniboiné families. Explorers possibly traveled across the portage with Indian guides but no written account of such use has been uncovered.

The first documented travel along the *Grand Portage* was made in 1731. Explorer and trader Pierre Gaultier, *Sieur de la Vérendrye*, sent a son and nephew across the *Portage* with instructions to establish a post on Rainy Lake. *La Vérendrye*’s account indicated that the *Portage* was well known by native people. He described it as being from three to three and a quarter

lieues (7.5-8.1 miles). He also noted, “*all our people, in dismay at the length of the portage. . . mutinied and loudly demanded that I should turn back.*”

After *La Vérendrye*, other explorers and traders traveled the *Grand Portage* to access the *pays d’en haut*, the vast unknown “up country,” of the northwest. By 1763, after conclusion of the French and Indian War, the British had wrested control of the fur trade from the French, and trade with Ojibwe and other woodland and plains Indians continued to expand. The North West Company, in 1784, began building its summer headquarters at the eastern terminus of the *Portage*. For the next 25 years, voyageurs, clerks, guides, interpreters, wintering partners and agents of the NWC, the fractious XY Company and smaller firms routinely used the *Grand Portage*.



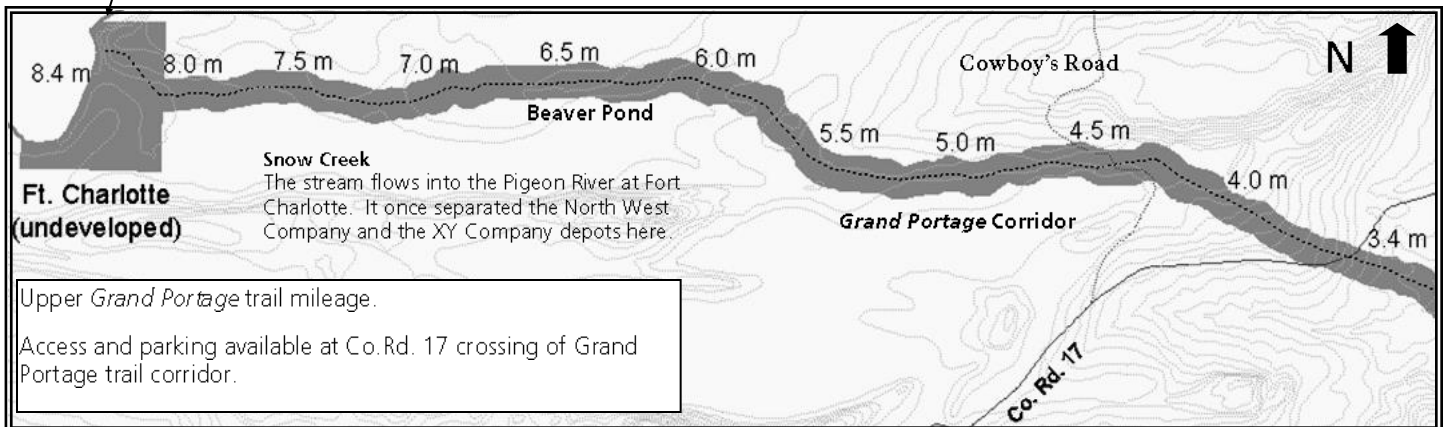
The *Grand Portage* goes through a gap in the hills

Pigeon River

The Pigeon River is the western terminus of the *Grand Portage* and forms part of the international border between the United States and Canada. From Fort Charlotte the river flows 22 miles east over hazardous rapids, cascades and waterfalls finally emptying into Lake Superior. To avoid these obstacles, Indian people portaged their canoes across the *Grand Portage* between the river and Lake Superior long before Europeans arrived.

Fort Charlotte

The North West Company and later the XY Company built stockade depots here. They enclosed warehouses and support buildings to temporarily store and secure trade items and furs being transported across the *Grand Portage*. Fort Charlotte was named after the wife of King George III.



During the 1790s, Fort Charlotte was such a busy depot that winterer Mr. Donald Ross was called "the governor," due to his long tenure there.

Fort Charlotte watercolor by Howard Sivertson (View original in Heritage Center at top of stairs)

Distances

Distances along the *Grand Portage* are indicated in miles by travel in both directions on the Grand Portage is shown below.

From Fort Charlotte to Lake Superior		From Lake Superior to Fort Charlotte
0	Fort Charlotte	8.5
2.5	Beaver Pond	6.5
4.4	Co. Rd 17	3.4
7.8	MN Hwy 61	.6
8.5	Lake Superior	0

Parking

Portage users may park vehicles at the Heritage Center parking lot or at the County Road 17 crossing. If your plans include camping at Fort Charlotte, please obtain your free permit at the information desk in the Heritage Center. Please inform a park ranger if you intend to leave vehicle(s) overnight in the parking lot.

What is a Portage?

A *portage* is an overland trail or pathway which permits the transport of materials such as canoes, supplies and cargo from one body of water to another.



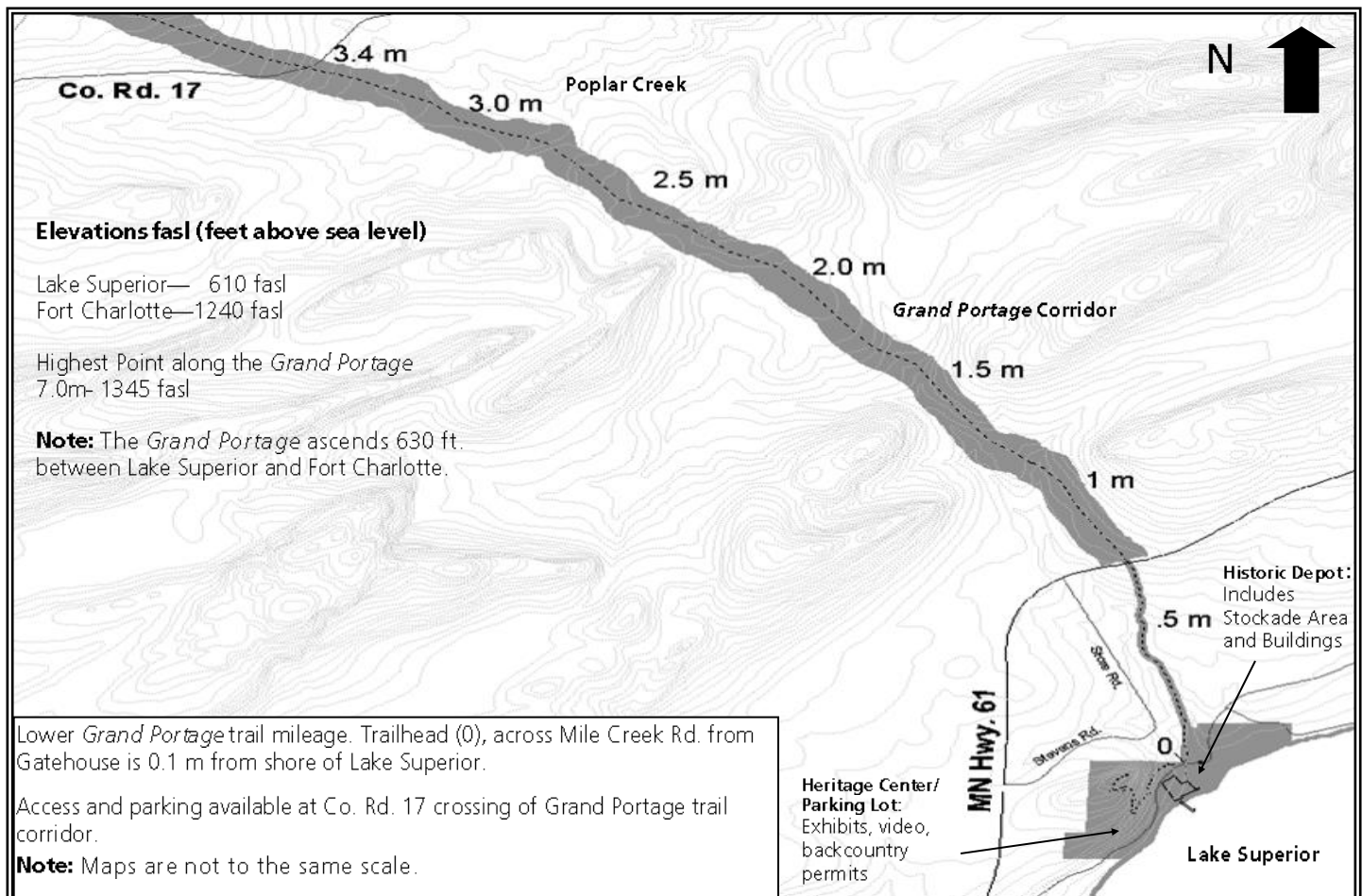
Majestic old growth eastern white pine along the Grand Portage.

Poses

During fur trade times the *Grand Portage* was divided between 16 to 18 *poses* or resting places. Such rest stops were usually located near a difficult section of a portage such as a hill or marshy area and frequently near sources of fresh water. Here voyageurs unloaded their heavy packs, waited for their strength to return and enjoyed a drink or brief smoke of their pipe before continuing.

Poses also served as temporary collection points for packs of valuable merchandise. All packs and materials being carried across a portage were assembled together before moving to the next *pose*. By moving the packs in this organized way, any loss was minimized.

The length of a portage was frequently defined by the number of *poses* it contained. They were generally one-third to one-half mile apart depending on the difficulty of the terrain. The location of a *pose* probably changed over time as the conditions in that particular area changed.



Camping/Hiking and Skiing

The *Grand Portage* is open year round for hiking, cross country skiing and snowshoeing. You may access the *Portage* from the Heritage Center parking lot overlooking Lake Superior, MN Hwy. 61, Co. Road 17 or from Fort Charlotte on the Pigeon River.

The *Grand Portage* climbs 630 feet between Lake Superior and the Pigeon River. Round-trip hiking time from the depot is approximately 10 to 12 hours.

Co. Road 17 crosses the *Grand Portage* at its approximate mid-point and is about 11.5 miles from the Heritage Center parking lot. Take MN Hwy. 61 south from Casino Road, travel about a quarter mile to the junction of Co. Road 17. Turn right on Co. Road 17 and follow it until it meets Old U.S. Hwy. 61. Co. Road 17 continues to the right, passes Mt. Maud Road on the right, and Partridge Falls road on the left eventually crossing the well marked Grand Portage mid-point trailhead.

Safety

The *Grand Portage* is often wet and muddy during late spring, summer and early fall. Terrain is uneven and there are exposed rock surfaces and tree roots. Boardwalks have been constructed over some of the wettest places, but large areas of standing water frequently remain throughout the year. Sturdy, waterproof footwear is recommended.

- Carry plenty of drinking water.
- Mosquitoes and black flies are abundant from late spring until mid-summer. Take repellent with you.
- Please stay on the *Portage*. Old logging roads and animal trails crisscross the *Grand Portage* and may lead you astray.
- Do not disturb wildlife or archeological remains.

Camping at Fort Charlotte

- Two campsites at Fort Charlotte will accommodate up to 10 people.
- Reservations for a free camping permit can be made ahead of time by calling for assistance during business hours or online.
- More information is available online at: www.nps.gov/grpo/planyourvisit/permitsandreservations.htm.
- Please inform a park ranger if you plan to leave your car in the parking lot overnight or longer.

Leave No Trace Camping

- Carrying a backpacking stove is recommended.
- Campfires are permitted only in fire grates.
- A pit toilet is located nearby.
- There is no safe drinking water at Fort Charlotte, so water must be filtered, chemically treated or boiled before drinking.
- Please pack out what you pack in. Do not bury trash or place it in the pit toilet.
- Use only dead and downed wood for campfires.
- Do not cut down trees near the campsites or peel bark from them.



Prohibited on the Grand Portage:

- Motorized Vehicles
- Motorcycles
- ATVs (All-terrain vehicles)
- Snowmobiles
- Bicycles
- Horses

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and some trivial. Eight hundred and one years ago, for example, the Magna Carta was signed and is significant as one of the first documents detailing human rights. A hundred years ago some of the bloodiest battles of World War I raged at Verdun and Somme, France. Hundreds of thousands of soldiers died. Tanks were also first used in 1916. On the trivial side of anniversaries this year is the centennial of the Professional Golf Association and the 50th anniversary of Star Trek.

Locally, there was no mention of the creation of the National Park Service in the Cook County News Herald. Instead, there are news entries about the white pine logging operation on the Swamp River – one of the last cuts of the primeval white pine. Basket socials were a big deal, when a young woman would prepare a basket and her suitors would bid on the basket as a fund raising method. The highest paid basket was \$7.00 and the lowest \$2.00. The local paper even had a byline on “Scandinavian news” with the opening “News from the Old Home.” In 1916 there was even a post office robbery and escape and subsequent recapture of the thief, but no mention of the creation of the fledgling agency. Fox farms—raising specially colored foxes—for their pelts was a common practice, including on ground many of you will walk today – what is now the North West Company post grounds.

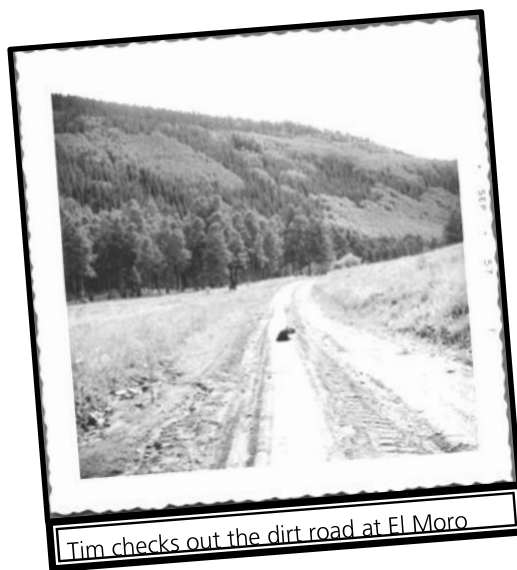
The idea of conservation is much older than the creation of the National Park Service. Ironically, even

one of the rapacious fur trade companies, the Hudson’s Bay Company, endorsed it in limited circumstances almost 200 years ago. The HBC was responding to “exhausted districts” where beaver were extirpated, or very rare. So they came up with the idea of “resting” some districts, where they had a monopolistic hold on the trade. They issued quotas on the numbers of beaver and other fur bearers that might be trapped. The key idea here was limiting the take, or conserving some animals. They also attempted to “nurse the country” by stopping the practice of spring and summer trapping of beaver. Ironically they found

nursing the country in their best interests – in some places – not unlike the National Park Service’s mission.

I hope your visit here will stimulate you to think about Grand Portage and the conservation of some of America’s treasures. National Parks have had a seminal

effect on me – my first memory is enjoying the dirt road at El Moro National Monument in New Mexico. That experience and others led me here. I hope your time with us will also be special, thought-provoking, and pleasurable. Thank you for stepping into Grand



Tim checks out the dirt road at El Moro

Ojibwemodaa: Let's Speak Ojibwe

Ranger Jeremy Kingsbury

These phrases can be seen around Grand Portage, or can be used during your visit here.

Boozhoo: (Boo–Zhoo): Hello (slightly formal)

Aaniin: (Ah-Neen): Hi

Mii Gwech: (Me –Gway-ch): Thank you

Biindigen: (Been-dig- ain): Come inside

Awegonen?: (Away-gon-in): What is it?

Aaniindi?: (Ah-neen-dee): Where is it?

Ganawaabi: (Gah-nah-wah-bee) Look

Ikwe: (Ick- way): Woman

Inini: (in- in- ee): Man

Abinoojinh: (Ah- Bin-oooh-jee): Child

Bajjishka'ogaa: (Bah-Jeesh-ka-oh-gahn): Conical Lodge

Wiigiwaam: (Wee-gih-wahm): Wigwam

Nisawa'ogaa: (Nih-sah-wah-oh-gahn): Peaked Lodge

Gigawaabamin Minawaa: (Gih-gah-wah-bah-min Meen-ah-wah): See you later

National Park Service: Steward of America's Special Places

Ranger Beth Drost

Can you imagine a world with no borders? Before European settlement of North America, there were no borders and there were millions of indigenous people sharing the land. The indigenous tribes of North America lived with the land, but they also fought for territory, they traveled, and they traded with other tribes. Yet, they did not draw borders. The land was not owned. All of North America was once wide-open.

As Europeans settled North America, they drew borders. Border lines divided countries, divided states and territories, and counties, cities, blocks, homesteads, even rooms. Have you ever seen a dividing line through a shared siblings' room?

If everything needs a border, then it was inevitable that we would draw borders around what we want to protect. Conservationists like Stephen Mather and Horace Albright realized that if we didn't begin to protect wilderness areas and cultural and historic sites, they would be destroyed. Today, we preserve and protect majestic natural wonders and significant sites that exemplify our cultural heritage. We even set aside areas in urban centers, across rural landscapes, deep within oceans, and across night skies. We call these areas parks. The parks are set aside for our enjoyment.

The National Park Service (NPS) is an agency within the U.S. Department of the Interior that was created to take care of our parks. Prior to the creation of the National Park Service, there was no one entity that oversaw the growing system of national sites. The NPS was created on August 25, 1916 through legislation passed in Congress and signed into law by President Woodrow Wilson. The establishing law is called the National Park Service Organic Act, or "the Organic Act," as it is referred. Thirty-seven park areas had already been set aside for public use, and they became part of the NPS. The new agency would assure the existing and future parks in the service had one consistent voice when it came to managing and protecting the resources. Today, the National Park Service takes care of over 400 of our nation's parks.

For one hundred years, the mission of the NPS is

unchanged, the Organic Act states that the mission is to "Preserve unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations." As the NPS now enters its second century of stewardship, service-wide goals are to connect with and create the next generation of park visitor, supporters, and advocates.

Of course, all parks have their own creation stories, but Grand Portage National Monument's story will rival the most compelling. The story behind the creation of the national monument is especially intriguing because it was a project that involved unprecedented agreements between the NPS and tribal leaders. The park lies entirely within the Grand Portage Indian Reservation, on land partially gifted to the American people by the Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa. The perseverance and collaboration of a sovereign people with local, state, and ultimately federal agencies, created a partnership as unique as the monument itself. The willing transfer of land titles and interests by a tribe to the federal government alone was unheard of. Here is how Grand Portage National Monument came to be.

The site at Grand Portage became a National Historic Site in 1951, when most of the country's historic sites were managed by the NPS. In 1952, a memorandum of agreement between the Secretary of the Interior and the Grand Portage Ojibwe pledged the National Park Service to erect two bronze markers at each end of the Portage, to publish literature for visitors and to cooperate with Grand Portage to insure the site's preservation. NPS Director Conrad Wirth, in a letter to Minnesota Senator Hubert Humphrey, stated that NPS could not effectively administer the site (provide adequate appropriations, management, etc.) without holding title to the land.

There were numerous and sometimes heated debates within the Reservation Business Committee (RBC), the governing body in Grand Portage, on whether to approve the land transfer and relinquish reservation

(Continued on page 15)

land back to the U.S. government, a rare occurrence, to say the least. The timing could not have been worse as the federal government was in the midst of carrying out a “termination and relocation” policy. The policy’s express aim was to terminate the sovereign status of tribes, revoke the federal trust status of reservation lands, and relocate Indians from reservations to urban areas. Over 100 tribes across the United States were terminated during this time and their land taken from them. Grand Portage Tribal leaders had to make the tough call to relinquish cherished morsels of their homeland, on their own, in order to create the park hoping for a better future for their people. In the end, they decided to go ahead with the land exchange. Around half of the 710 acres for Grand Portage National Monument was donated by the tribe, the other half was sold to the federal government.

On June 8, 1953 the Grand Portage Tribal Council agreed, due to the limited financial assistance available under the current agreement, that it would cede lands to the NPS to create Grand Portage National Monument. However, it took five years to sort out the details of the agreement and assure crucial subsistence rights for the Grand Portage people were retained. The lengthy process was concluded in September 1958, with the passage of Public Law 85-910, establishing Grand Portage National Monument essentially as it is today.

In a speech at the Cook County’s Civic Council meeting in October of 1958 and reported in the October 2, 1958 edition of the Cook County News Herald, Congressman John A. Blatnik hailed passage of the legislation to create Grand Portage National Monument as one of the major achievements of Minnesota’s statehood centennial year. He termed

Where’s the Monument?

You’re here! A walk along the historic portage, or a trip back in time, or a spectacular view. It’s all here. You won’t find one physical obelisk, statue, or wall to ponder at Grand Portage National Monument. This is the monument, it is the rich archaeological resources, the original route of the Grand Portage, and the homeland of the Grand Portage Ojibwe; and they are all right here.

National monuments are reserved because they contain objects of historic, prehistoric, or scientific interest. In contrast, a national park is set aside because it contains an outstanding scenic feature or a natural phenomenon. National monuments are usually established by the president of the United States, but can also be created by Congress.

This national monument was created to preserve and protect a significant center of cultural exchange, important transportation route (the Grand Portage), and the stories and history of the Grand Portage Ojibwe.

What is this national monument to you?
Why do you think this place is special?



Grand Portage as probably Minnesota’s most historic area and went on to say, “It is important that this historic place be preserved for the enjoyment of all the people and that future generations may secure the benefit from seeing the area, which played a significant part in our nation’s history substantially as it was at the time.” In the troubled economic times of the late 1950s this had to have been welcome news. The creation of the national monument was the capstone of years of significant collaboration efforts to preserve this special place for the next generations.

For one hundred years, we have drawn borders around America’s special places. As the National Park Service now enters its second century of stewardship, we are setting our sights to connect with and create the next generation of park visitors, supporters, and advocates. Please join us, enjoy this land, learn something about this country, and be inspired to share it with future generations. How will you be inspired today?

Did the North West Company Leave an 18th Century Environmental Legacy?

Resource Assistant Brandon Seitz

Research indicates the southern boreal ecosystem of Grand Portage is highly sensitive to mercury deposition.

Grand Portage National Monument (GRPO) has had some disturbing environmental news of late. Together with partners at University of Wisconsin and the NPS Great Lakes Network we have discovered that there may be an environmental link to our past, namely mercury.

Quicksilver, as some would call it, can take many forms. Often it is emitted into the air as a byproduct of burning coal for energy or baking taconite for processing. These are our most significant modern sources. But there are many other smaller sources too. In order of least amounts of mercury to most are: the fillings in your teeth, compact fluorescent lightbulbs (CFL's), thermometers and thermostats. Thermostats contain as much mercury as 600 CFL's. Given all these sources of mercury, it really was no surprise that mercury was found in the environment at GRPO. What was surprising was the amount captured in the soil in a few areas - as much as 3 times that found in the western Great Lakes and the Experimental Lakes Area in Ontario, Canada. Also high in concentrations were mercury in fish, water, sediment and dragonfly larvae from GRPO streams. These high concentrations of mercury have important consequences.

First, 79% of fish that would make up the diet of belted kingfishers exceeded the dietary benchmark that indicates harm to health and reproduction. For mink, the dietary benchmark was exceeded in 23% of the fish that form the basis of their food. What about fish-eating people? As it happens, the streams of GRPO either don't have

the types of fish people eat, or in the case of Grand Portage Creek, have fish like trout that are protected from mercury bioaccumulation (accumulating mercury in higher concentrations than are found in the environment) by their life cycle. Large portions of life in the big blue waters of Lake Superior and a diet of organisms from the base of the food chain contribute to much lower concentrations of mercury in species such as rainbow and coaster brook trout.



Belted kingfisher with fish

Photo Howard Cheng Wikimedia Commons

So where did the extra mercury come from? Why has it accumulated in concentrations as much as three times greater than elsewhere? The answer could be in the trade patterns of the 18th century. Vermilion, a synthetic mercuric sulfide pigment derived from cinnabar ore, was a principal trade item and gift during the height of the fur trade. The supply of vermillion at GRPO was large enough that one 1797 inventory of trade goods left over from a season of trade listed more

than 100 pounds. Also left over were galipots (gallon pots) of mercurial ointments rubbed into the skin to cure what ailed you in the 18th century. How is it that people survived this way? How could they slather themselves with mercurial ointments and paint their skin vermilion? Fortunately for us, most sources of mercury (all of those listed above) produce mercury in its inorganic form. This mercury can pass right through us causing relatively little harm. But, if that mercury is methylated in the environment, or changed into a form that is easily accumulated in the fat and muscle of organisms- like in a lake, wetland, stream, swamp or bog it takes on a very harmful bioaccumulative form. This methylated mercury accumulates in organisms and damages health and reproduction. To protect yourself, be sure to read consumption advisories that are posted about fish, eat fish low on the food chain and go fishing primarily in sky



Mink with fish. Photo Bjorn Tennesse Wikimedia Commons

blue waters rather than those stained the color of tea.

More research is planned this summer to identify the specific sources of mercury and assess bioaccumulation in marsh-dwelling song birds; watch for updates in newsletters to come.

What Can I Do?

- READ and follow federal, state, and tribal fish consumption guidelines—especially women and children.
- REDUCE the amount of energy you use, both electricity and fuel.
- REUSE energy-expensive consumer products; give a second thought to disposable items.
- RECYCLE everything, including electronics, steel, fluorescent bulbs, and thermometers.
- and SHARE your new knowledge of mercury with others.

Where Can I Find More Information?

1. Biodiversity Research Institute, The Extent and Effects of Mercury Pollution in the Great Lakes Region

<http://www.briloan.org/mercury-in-the-great-lakes-region>

2. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Basic Information on Mercury

<http://www.epa.gov/mercury/about.htm>

3. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Fish Consumption Guidelines

<http://www.epa.gov/hg/advisories.htm>

4. Minnesota Department of Health, Fish Consumption Guidelines

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/fish/>

5. Grand Portage Environmental Department, Guide to Eating Fish

**-Send inquiries to: Grand Portage Environmental Department
27 Store Road, PO Box 428
Grand Portage, MN 55605**

AREA INFORMATION:

There are a few places nearby to purchase light meals, snacks, gas, and other necessities.

The food and lodging information provided here is for the convenience of our visitors,
and is not an endorsement by the National Park Service.

SERVICES:

Grand Portage Trading Post, Post Office & SPIRIT Gas/Diesel – Drive about 1/2 mile west (a right hand turn out of Heritage Center parking lot) onto Mile Creek Road. The Trading Post, Post Office and SPIRIT gas station are on the right between Mile Creek Road and Highway 61. Phone: 218.475.2282

Grand Portage Lodge/Gift Shop/Island View Dining Room – Drive about 1/2 mile west on Mile Creek Road. The Grand Portage Lodge 100-room facility is on the left at the stop sign. Phone: 218.475.2401

Ryden's Border Store/Phillips 66 Gas – Located about 4 1/2 miles north of Grand Portage National Monument on Highway 61. At any junction to Highway 61 in Grand Portage, turn right (east) on Highway 61. Follow Highway 61 to Ryden's on your left. Phone: 218.475.2330

Voyageurs Marina – Located about 1½ miles from the monument. Follow Mile Creek Road east over stone bridge. Follow County Road 17 to your left, up over the hill and past the church and school. Continue to follow County Road 17 1½ miles, to the east side of the bay. The marina will be on your right. Under new management. Phone 218.475.2476

CAMPGROUNDS:

Grand Portage Marina & Campground – Marina Rd. (adjacent to Grand Portage Lodge & Casino), Grand Portage, MN, 55605. Phone 218.475.2476

Judge Magney State Park – 4051 E. Hwy. 61, Grand Marais, MN, 55604. Phone: 218.387.3039

Grand Marais RV Park & Campground – Highway 61, Grand Marais, MN, 55604. Phone: 218.387.1712

LOCAL STATE PARKS:

Grand Portage State Park – 9393 E Hwy 61, five miles east of Grand Portage. Offers a scenic trail to the spectacular Pigeon Falls. The park has a visitor contact station and sales area. There are no camping facilities. Phone: 218.475.2360

Judge C.R. Magney State Park – 4051 E. Hwy. 61, 14 miles west of Grand Portage. Offers trout fishing and white-water kayaking on the Brule River. There are six miles of summer hiking trails and five miles of winter ski trails. A well-maintained trail winds along the river to the Upper and Lower Falls and the Devil's Kettle, a large pothole into which half of the river disappears. Phone: 218.387.3039

Cascade River State Park – 3481 W. Hwy. 61, 45 miles west of Grand Portage. Offers spectacular waterfalls along the Cascade River. There are also scenic overlooks of Lake Superior. There are 18 miles of trails through a birch and spruce forest. The park has a 40-site campground, picnic facilities, and plenty of lake and river fishing. Phone: 218.387.3053

Need Special Assistance?





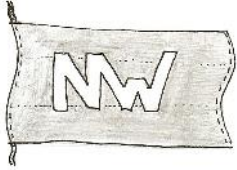

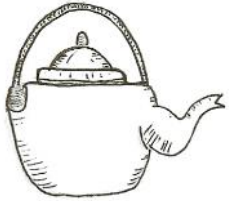





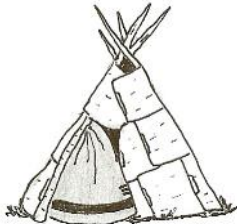









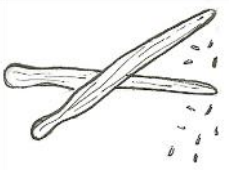


*For help or questions
concerning accessibility
at the park,
please contact
any park ranger, or
Chief of Interpretation,
Pam Neil.*

218.475.0123 Voice/TDD

GRPO_interpretation@nps.gov

KIDS PAGE: FUR TRADE BINGO

Circle objects you see in the Heritage Center, Ojibwe Village, Voyageur's Encampment, Warehouse, Kitchen and Great Hall as you tour Grand Portage National Monument. Find five objects in a row vertically, horizontally or diagonally and you win!

B	I	N	G	O
				
				
				
				
				

A FEW TIPS TO HELP YOU ENJOY YOUR VISIT

Safety Officer Sharon Walker

- Wear sturdy footwear when walking on Monument trails. Please stay on the trails. Watch closely for roots and uneven ground to avoid tripping.
 - Do not drink water from streams or lakes unless you first boil or treat it.
 - Never hike alone. Always tell a friend/relative where you are going, and when you plan to return.
 - When hiking in the backcountry during summer months, the use of insect repellent and/or head nets is strongly recommended.
-

REMINDERS AND HELPFUL INFORMATION

- Notify a park employee if you encounter any situation you feel is unsafe.
 - All plants and animals within Monument boundaries are protected. Please help us protect them by not feeding or injuring animals or picking plants.
 - Pets and smoking are not permitted inside the stockade walls or inside buildings.
 - Please keep bicycles out of the stockade and secured to the bike rack provided at the Heritage Center. Do not lock bicycles to sign posts or trees.
 - A picnic area is located at the west end of the parking lot at the Mount Rose Loop trailhead stairs. Another is east of the palisade across Grand Portage Creek, and may be reached by walking the path between Grand Portage Bay and the palisade and crossing the footbridge.
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VISITING ISLE ROYALE NATIONAL PARK

For information about ferry service to Isle Royale National Park please ask park staff.

For more information about Grand Portage National Monument, contact:

Superintendent, Grand Portage National Monument

P.O. Box 426, 170 Mile Creek Road, Grand Portage, Minnesota, 55605.

Voice/TDD: 218.475.0123

**Visit our website at: <http://www.nps.gov/grpo/index.htm>,
or contact us by e-mail at: grpo_interpretation@nps.gov**

This document can be obtained in alternate formats.

Please contact the park's accessibility coordinator to make a request.